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GILES , CHAUNCEY

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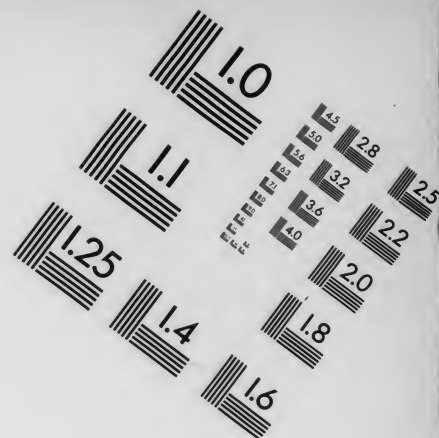
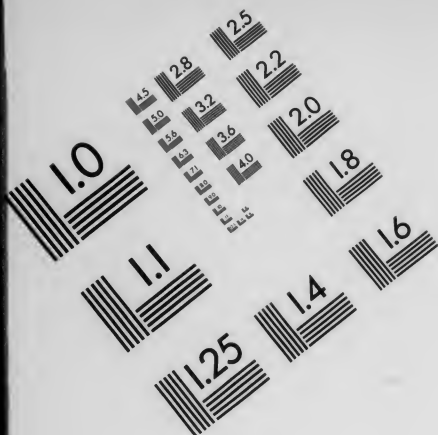


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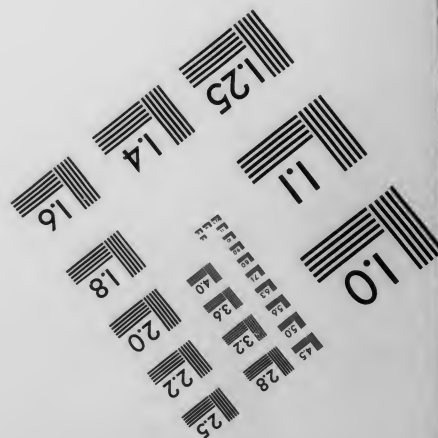
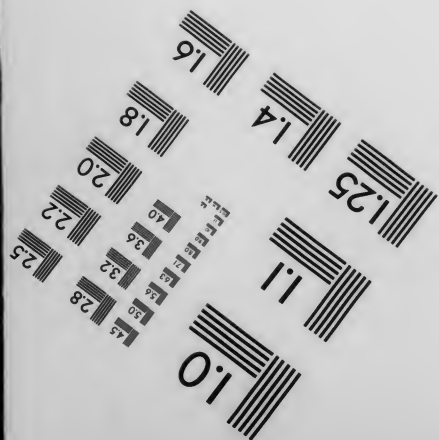
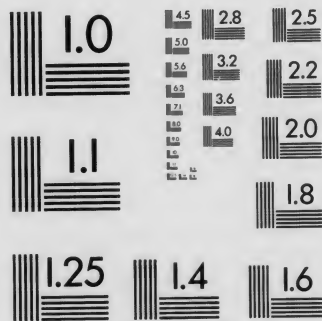
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THE NEW AND THE OLD DOCTRINE OF THE
UNITY AND TRINITY IN GOD.

BY THE REV. CHAUNCEY GILES.

*“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth:
in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name
one.”—ZECH. xiv. 9.*

IN these words the Lord declares by the mouth of His prophet that the time is coming when He will be universally acknowledged in name and person as the supreme and only Divine Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Saviour. “In that day” all the Divine attributes will be referred to one Being, one Person. He will be addressed by one name. He will appear to human consciousness and thought as one supreme Ruler, possessing in Himself all the infinite prerogatives of universal and perfect dominion. Men will not say one with the lips while they think three. There will be perfect unity of thought and speech. All the Divine attributes of love and wisdom, justice and mercy, will be seen to be in perfect harmony, and all tending to the attainment of one end, the forma-

tion of a heaven of intelligent human beings, who can be the free recipients of the Divine love in every form of good, in ever-increasing fulness and excellence forever.

The unity, the oneness of the Lord in person, form, and attributes is essential to the accomplishment of this purpose. As the Lord is the centre and source of all life and truth and power, our conception of Him is the central truth in human minds; our supreme love of Him the central life in human souls. Our conception of God forms the understanding, gives quality to every affection, direction and color to every thought. Unity and harmony in our ideas of Him give unity and harmony to all knowledge. Division in our conceptions of His Person, confusion with regard to the elements of His character, cause division, confusion, and contradiction in all the purposes, methods, and activities in the creation. Our idea of the Lord is to our religion and all the doctrines relating to it, as the germ in the seed to the whole plant. It gives form, quality, and color to every particular in it, and to the fruit it bears. A truer, a higher, a clearer conception of the Lord and of His relations to men will enter into and become the life and forming power of every human faculty; it will harmonize, elevate, enlarge, and enrich every human capacity. It is a subject, therefore, of the greatest importance, and the possibility of gaining any new light upon it ought to enlist our deepest interest.

In asking your attention to this subject, therefore, I do not feel that I am inviting you to the discussion of a dry, abstract and impractical question, but to one that is intimately related to your highest good. We believe that the doctrines of the New Church give us new light on this subject; that they help us to solve the problem of the unity and the trinity in the Divine nature in a way that preserves the personal unity, and makes it more clear, distinct, and solid, while at the same time they give us an equally clear, distinct, and solid Trinity. They have solved for us the mystery which has generally been regarded as impenetrable, and given to us a rational and comprehensible idea of the fundamental religious doctrine which is generally supposed to be above human reason, if not opposed to it. This doctrine is revealed in the Sacred Scriptures, and can be shown to be taught in every passage relating to the subject. Of course I cannot present this vast question from every point of view in one discourse. The most I can hope to do is to give a general idea of the new doctrine, and show how it differs from the one generally taught in the Christian world.

As a practical way of doing this, I propose to compare the new with the old and show the difference between them, and trace the effects of those differences in forming our conception of the Lord, His relations to man, and the means He employs for the forgiveness of sin and the development of a Christian character. I ask your candid attention and unbiassed

judgment while I proceed to accomplish the work I have undertaken to do.

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.” This is the universal teaching of the Sacred Scriptures. That there is one Supreme Being and only one is the doctrine of the Christian world. Trinitarian and Unitarian alike declare it. We may regard it as a central and unalterable truth. In discussing the subject, therefore, we must not admit anything that tends to dissipate, or weaken, or dim this central and universal fact. Our ideas of God must be formed by it, our reasoning must be governed by it, and tend to confirm it; our interpretation of every passage of the Lord’s Word must accord with it, and be determined by it. Whatever may be the appearance of the letter, it must teach this truth if it is the Word of the Lord, and it must be interpreted in a way to confirm and illustrate it. If we do not see how any particular passage can be made to teach this doctrine, or if it seems to us to deny it, we must conclude that we do not understand it. We must not admit that there can be two doctrines upon the subject that are contrary to each other. The truth that the Lord our God is one Lord and that there is no other, must be so taught as to produce in the mind the idea of one, distinct Divine Being. We must think of Him as *one*. There is no use in saying one unless we think one. The lips ought not to belie the thought. The principle of the Divine unity must also extend to every doctrine

and idea concerning the relations of the Lord to man; to His methods of creating, sustaining, governing, redeeming, sanctifying, saving, punishing, and blessing men. No motives, plans, measures, or conclusions must be admitted that tend to dissipate or obscure the conception of one will, one understanding, one supreme mind. From this point of view and with this immutable principle for our guide, let us compare the old with the new doctrine.

The common doctrine in the Greek, Catholic, and Evangelical Protestant Churches is, that there is one God, but that He exists in three persons, called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, each of whom by Himself is God. God the Father, who is “without body, parts, or passions,” is the Creator, God the Son is the Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier. This conception of God enters into all theology and gives character and quality to all God’s relations to man, and to every doctrine of religion. One God in three distinct persons, each of whom by Himself is God, is the universal conception of the Divine Being in the Catholic and Evangelical Churches. This is Trinitarianism.

The doctrines of the New Church also declare as emphatically as words can express that there is one God, and only one; but they deny that He exists in three persons each of whom is God. They affirm that God is one person, one being, in the same sense that a man is one person, one being. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost constitute one Divine Being.

We cannot conceive of the possibility that there are three Divine, self-existent and omnipotent persons. If there are, we cannot conceive how they can be one Being. Saying they are one does not make them one, and every attempt to show that they are one has been and must forever prove unsuccessful. Here, then, is the first point of difference between the common and the new faith on the unity of God. The old teaches that there are three Divine persons in the one God, the new that there is only one person who alone is God.

With the Trinitarian we believe in the Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We recognize the distinctions denoted by these terms, but we regard them as distinctions of the modes of being and operation of the one Supreme Being or Person, and not of three. There is but one Divine consciousness, one life, one power, one purpose, one will, one understanding. The union between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is not of the same nature as that which exists between three men who think alike and act together in perfect harmony. It is not agreement between different parties. It is that complete and absolute oneness of being, formed by all the faculties which constitute that being, working together in perfect harmony for one end, which distinguishes one person from another and constitutes personality. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the elements, the essential factors which compose the nature of God, each of which is a complement of

the others and essential to His existence. They are the substance, form, and united action of His Being in carrying His purposes into effect, as man's soul, mind, and body are the substance, form, and united action of his being in carrying his purposes into effect. As the three essential constituents of a man are not three persons, but one man, so the three essential constituents of a Divine Being are not three Divine Persons, but one God in one person.

The Trinitarian declares that there is only one God as stoutly as the New Churchman or the Unitarian; but his doctrine of the Trinity forms his thought and leads him to think of three distinct persons, to each of whom He attributes Divine qualities, which the other does not possess, while he says one. The Trinity of persons is the practical belief; the unity, the theoretical one. There is abundant evidence of this contrariety between thought and speech in all the doctrines and rituals of the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Nearly all the prayers are addressed to Almighty God, and when the petition is ended, He is implored to grant the requests for the sake of the Son, or through our Lord Jesus Christ. One person is asked to grant favors for the sake of another, and often to send the third person, the Holy Spirit, to convey the desired blessing. If any one doubts this statement, let him examine the Prayer-Book of the Episcopal Church, or listen to the prayers he hears in public worship, and he will find it to be true.

Look into your own minds and see if you do not think of God the Father as entirely distinct from the Son and the Holy Spirit, as distinct as two human beings are from each other. I believe I am fully justified by the liturgical forms of worship, and by general experience and the usages of religious literature, in the conclusion that the doctrine of the Trinity, as held and taught and practised in worship, results in regarding the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three distinct Divine Beings.

The doctrines of the New Church teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in the one Divine Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and constitute it. The Father is in Him and the Holy Spirit is from Him. We do not know of any words that express the doctrine of the New Church more accurately than those of the apostle when he says, "In Him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily." They present to our minds one distinct, Divine Person in the human form as the embodiment of all Divine qualities, and the supreme object of our thought, love, and worship. There is nothing in the doctrine or conception that tends to divorce thought from speech. We think what we speak, and speak as we think. When we think of the Lord Jesus Christ we think of the Father who is in Him, as we think of the mind as well as of the body when we think of a human being. When we pray to Jesus Christ, we pray to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we love Him, we love the

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we ask a favor of Him, we ask it of His whole Being; we ask it of the Divine love, of the Divine wisdom, of the Divine mercy and justice; of every form, faculty, and quality of the Divine Nature. There is no separation, confusion, and distraction of thought and affection. We do not ask one Divine Person to grant us a favor for the sake of another, or through another. We ask it because we need it. We ask it because we know that He desires to grant us all and more than we can conceive. We ask it for the sake of His own love and mercy, and for our sake, because He loves and pities us. The thought and affection are centred on one Being, one Divine Person, who alone can forgive, save, and bless. This is a distinctly new conception of God, and tends to bring Him distinctly before the mind as one Divine Being in the common and true conception of one Person.

The doctrine commonly accepted in the Trinitarian Churches declares that "God is without body, parts, or passions." If this is true, there is no possibility of forming any distinct conception of Him. He must be without form, for that which has no body and no parts can have no form. If it were possible for a being to exist without body or parts, we could gain no idea of him, because an idea is a mental image of some form. This attempt to conceive what is declared to be inconceivable puts our Heavenly Father at an inconceivable distance from us, involves Him in impenetrable mystery, and gives us only a faint,

indistinct conception of simple existence, and results in many minds in the belief of a First Cause, or in practical Agnosticism, which declares that there may be a First Cause and there may not be. We do not know. So we neither affirm nor deny. We simply say we do not know. In other minds this vague and indistinct idea of God is expressed in the famous words of Matthew Arnold as "the somewhat outside ourselves which makes for righteousness."

But practically the doctrine is denied even by those who nominally hold to it. Christians of every sect believe in a personal God. But what is personality? There is no personality in the atmosphere, in the ether, in light and heat, though there is somewhat in them that makes for creation, growth, and the essentials of life. We do not attribute personality to plants or animals. We only accord it to intelligent thinking beings. It implies a will and an understanding, the power to form a distinct purpose, and to act in freedom in carrying that purpose into effect. A mere force, a tendency, a formless essence, or abstract qualities do not constitute personality. If God is a Divine Person, He must be form and substance; He must have existence; that is, He must stand forth in some form; He must have faculties, and they can only exist and act in some form.

The doctrine that God is without body, parts, or passions leads to other conclusions which the mind instinctively and of necessity rejects. If it is true,

it can only apply to the Father and the Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ, who is regarded as the second Person in the Trinity, certainly has body and parts. This definition of God excludes Him from the Trinity. The inconsequence of this doctrine is seen in another respect. The Father is generally represented by theologians as sitting on a throne, with the Son at His right hand. But how could such a posture be possible if the Father has no body? How could the Son sit at His right hand if He has none of the parts of the human body? It would be impossible in the nature of things. Another point worthy of notice in which common belief is contrary to this doctrine is, that God, the Father, is generally considered and represented in the Sacred Scriptures as a most passionate Being. Wrath, anger, fury, vengeance, jealousy, hatred, are attributed to Him in terms as strong as language can express, and the whole scheme of salvation is constructed with the distinct purpose of saving men from His wrath. This opposition of common thought to common doctrine distracts the mind and tends to weaken faith in all doctrine, and leads to unbelief.

The new doctrine teaches that the one and only Lord God is in the human form; that He is a Divine and infinitely perfect Man. This is what He Himself teaches us in the whole of the revelation He has made to men. He declares in the beginning that "He created man in His own image and after His likeness." This testimony is suf-

ficient of itself if there were no other. But there is abundance of it. Whenever He has distinctly appeared to men He has appeared in the human form. The various parts of the human organism are attributed to Him. He has head and hands and feet and limbs. He hears and sees, and exercises all the senses. His ears are open to every human cry. His eye sees every human event. When He came into the world and dwelt among men, He came in the human form which was His own; and since His glorification and ascension He has manifested Himself to men in the same form. There is no break or weak point in the testimony. Every fact tends to the one point, namely, that the Supreme Intelligence, by whatever name He is called, is in the human form, and possesses all its parts and organs.

But there is a higher and, if possible, more conclusive evidence of this fact. Form, quality, and capacity are inseparably connected. The Divine qualities which exist in their infinite perfection and power in the Lord are finited in man. But that would be impossible if both God and man were not in the human form. The Lord cannot communicate His love and wisdom to a stone, or a plant, or an animal, and give it the power of knowing and loving Him, and the happiness which flows from the exercise of these faculties, because the stone and the plant have no organic forms that can receive the forces which awaken these affections. Only those who

possess the human form can exercise human qualities. Man is in the human form because the Lord is. We derive our form from the Lord according to the universal laws of heredity.

The new doctrines do not try to teach men to conceive of the inconceivable, to think of the unthinkable, to love the unknowable. They fall in with the nature of the human faculties. They teach us how to do what we were made to do. They bring the Lord near to us, and present Him in a comprehensible and rational form adapted to the capacities of our nature. We get a distinct idea of Him which is familiar to us, and we are led along in the line of the Divine order and according to the nature of the human faculties, to higher conceptions and more intimate communion with Him who is the constant source of our life and the giver of all our blessings. The old tends to confuse and distract the mind; it leads to indistinct and erroneous conceptions of the Supreme Being. The new leads to harmony, distinctness, clearness, and assurance, which continue to increase as we advance in knowledge and a life according to the commandments.

There is another unconscious and constantly operating tendency of the doctrine of a Trinity of three persons, which still more effectively divides the Divine unity and separates the three essentials which compose it, and that is, the entirely different and distinct offices and qualities of character ascribed to each Person. The Father is the Creator and the

embodiment of law and justice. The Son is the Redeemer and the personification of love, mercy, and unselfish devotion to men. The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier, and is represented as carrying into effect the decisions of the first two persons in the Trinity. The Father is not generally represented as having any special agency in redeeming and saving men, except giving His Son to die for men. He stands aloof from the great work, the embodiment of law, and waits for the demands of justice to be satisfied. He alone possesses the pardoning power. Thus He is set off as it were from the Son and Holy Spirit, waiting in awful majesty for compliance with the terms on which He pardons the sinner. Practically He is regarded as the supreme ruler in the Trinity, as the First Cause, and the one whose decision is final. The Son and the Holy Spirit are declared to be equal with the Father, and yet the whole literature and worship of the Churches and the offices assigned them show that they are not so regarded practically. They do really occupy subordinate positions. And yet Jehovah repeatedly declares in the most solemn manner that He is the only Saviour and Redeemer; that He does not know of any other. He affirms that He is love and mercy itself. He is long-suffering, ready to forgive. He implores His children to turn to Him and not die. He describes His love by the most endearing relations known to men. He is father, husband, friend. His love is deeper, more constant and tender, than a mother's for her child.

But still He is generally regarded as the personification of inflexible justice.

On the other hand, the love and devotion of the Son is strongly contrasted with the stern justice of the Father. His nature is composed almost wholly of compassion. I do not remember to have ever heard of His justice. It never comes to the front and demands satisfaction. He is willing to suffer and die to satisfy the justice of the Father, but nothing is said about His own, or that of the third Person in the Trinity. The character of the Son is so different from that of the Father or of the Holy Spirit that He is an entirely different being from them. But how can this be if the Three Divine Persons are of the same substance, equal in power and glory, and possess the same elements of character and life?

The Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier. He applies the pardon purchased by the Son and granted by the Father. He comes to the earth on the errands of Father and Son, enters all hearts that will receive Him, cleanses them from sin, breathes new life into their dead affections, regenerates and prepares them for heaven. Nothing is said about His justice. He is not represented as having any part in the creation, as being distinguished for love or any other Divine attribute. Our Lord calls Him the Comforter, the Spirit of truth. He says He will send Him to illuminate the minds of His people and show them the meaning of what He had taught them. Time permits me to give but an outline of the distinct quali-

ties, characters, and offices attributed to the three Persons in the Godhead. They could be made much more distinct. But this is sufficient for my present purpose, which is to show the drift and tendency of the doctrine of the Trinity as usually held in the Evangelical Churches.

I have no desire to attribute to it any effects which do not follow from it. But does it not tend to divide rather than unite? Does it not result in the practical idea of three Divine Beings, each of whom by Himself is God, and consequently to produce the effect in the mind of three Gods, rather than of one Divine Being who is alone God? Is not the mind led insensibly and inevitably to the conclusion that there are three Divine minds, three Divine wills, three Divine understandings, three individual and distinct offices, neither of which the other could perform? I ask you who have been brought up under the influence of this teaching to look into your own minds and see how you think of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Do you have a clear and distinct conception of one Being, one form, one will, one purpose, one understanding, one power, the only centre and source of all life, the only directing mind, or is your thought divided among three? The result of a doctrine in forming the mind and determining the thought is the practical test of our conception of it.

The central doctrine of the New Church is this: God is one in essence and person, in whom is the

Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that one person is the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a distinct Trinity and complete unity. It discriminates between the essential constituents which compose the Divine Being, but does not separate them into distinct persons. They are the component parts, the factors of one person. If either of these factors were wanting, neither the Father, Son, nor Holy Spirit would be God. The Father is life in its origin, life as it is in itself, life as love and wisdom in infinite perfection and power, and consequently above the possibility of all human conception and thought. He is Jehovah, the I Am. The Son is the human nature, the human mind which the Father created from Himself, and with which He clothed Himself, and which became a part of Himself. And He did this for the purpose of revealing Himself to men and of bringing His Divine power to operate upon them more effectively.

The creation of every human being is effected in the same relative manner. The spirit which corresponds to Jehovah clothes itself with a human body which serves as a medium of communication with the material world. The Son was not a different person or being from Jehovah, as the body is not a different person from the spirit. Each is an essential of the other. The Holy Spirit is the Divine life or power of Jehovah, modified and adjusted to human conditions, and transmitted by the human nature He had assumed for this special purpose, as the material

body transmits and brings into effect the powers of the mind. There is the same trinity in every human being that there is in God, only in man it is created and finite, while it is infinite in God. But the order, relations, and use of the three essentials of being are the same in both, and there is no more mystery about the Divine Trinity than there is about the human trinity in every man and woman.

By looking at ourselves we can see how these three essentials of being are distinct and yet united in the Lord. The mind is not the body, and the body is not the mind. The influent power of the mind which controls the body and acts by means of it upon other minds and upon material things, is not the mind or the body. The three, mind, body, and the power of the mind, flowing into and acting by means of the body, constitute the man. The body without a mind is not a man, the mind without a body is not a man, and mind and body without the operation of the mind into and by means of the body are not a man. The three make one human being. So the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make one Divine Being. The Father is in the Son, as the mind is in the body. This the Son declares in the most explicit manner: "The Father is in me." "The Father doeth the works." The Son is the mediator, or medium by which the Father gets access to men and men get access to the Father. The Son, the human nature, is "the way." He is "the door." "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." The

body holds the same relation to the mind. The body is the way to the mind. The senses are the doors to the will and understanding. The Holy Spirit is the Divine truth, the Divine power proceeding from the Father, as light and heat and magnetic forces proceed from the material sun. As this spirit is from Jehovah, it partakes of His nature, and operates to cleanse man from sin and create him anew and restore the Divine image lost by sin. As the Father is in the Son, the Holy Spirit can only be transmitted by the Son. The Father sends the Spirit by the human medium He had assumed for that specific purpose.

Here we have distinctly set forth one Divine Being providing the means of carrying His purposes of love and wisdom into effect. He clothes Himself with a medium by means of which He can come near to dying humanity, and bring His Divine power to act upon human minds, cleanse them from sin and draw them to Himself. We have one God in the glorified person of Jesus Christ, in whom is the Divine Trinity.

This doctrine gives us a distinct object for the thoughts and affections to rest upon. That object is the glorified person of our Lord Jesus Christ. •It is an object made familiar to us by many humble, kind, and wonderful deeds, by much suffering and constant devotion to men, recorded in the Gospels; by a manifestation of love, wisdom, tenderness, and miraculous power calculated to awaken our love and

draw us by affection to worship and obey Him. Our God is not merely a First Cause, "a somewhat that makes for righteousness," a remote, invisible, and unapproachable and awful Being. He is a glorious, Divine, perfect Man, the embodiment of all Divine forces and human perfections. The thought and the affections are not divided between three persons. The Divine attributes are not parcelled out between others, giving to one the office of creator, to another the work of redemption, and to the third the power of sanctifying. One Person performs all these operations. We do not ask one to pardon, and save, and bestow blessings for the sake of another. There is only one to ask, only one who can pardon, only one who can save, only one who gives eternal life. There is only one infinite love, only one perfect wisdom, only one will, one purpose, one power, one Being who has life in Himself, and that Being is the Creator, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Sanctifier. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, "in whom dwelleth the fulness of the God-head bodily.'

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